The True Jesus and the "Other Jesus," a Convenient One

The Lord Jesus hated wickedness and lived without sin. He made no compromise with injustice. He not only preached the truth — He lived it in every detail: without concealment, without deceit, without compromise.

He was light in the midst of darkness, pure in a corrupt world, just in a crooked society. It is no surprise that His teaching on non-resistance and paying taxes stirred hatred toward Him. He was despised precisely because He exposed sin and called for a righteousness that went beyond appearances — reaching the heart and deeds of a person.

Today, things are no different. Authentic righteousness that condemns theft, lies, and injustice continues to provoke rejection and even hatred. Many reject the real Jesus and embrace “another Jesus” — an imaginary one who allows them to evade taxes, lie, and live unjustly without rebuke. But this “Jesus” is not the Savior of Scripture — he is a comfortable illusion that cannot save.

Today, many declare themselves born of God, yet live in contradiction to that claim. Some steal or approve of tax theft, support injustice and compromise, and still consider themselves part of His people. But an unjust life does not prove new birth. Disregard for Christ’s commands reveals a heart untouched by divine righteousness.

Scripture is clear: it is not religious acts, but living in righteousness, that confirms belonging to God — “This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not live in righteousness is not of God” (1 John 3:10).

True new birth is preceded by a genuine hunger and thirst for righteousness — a deep desire that shows itself in actions: in honesty, in truth, in renouncing sin, and in obedience to His commands. Any form of faith that does not produce a life lived in God’s righteousness is a great deception.

It is a painful reality: many say they love Him, but when it comes to obedience and living His commands, they choose darkness. They choose comfort, religion, and appearance — but not the Word.

The Lord Jesus is despised because of His Word, which does not accept compromise. The Lord says you cannot love Him and at the same time despise His commands: “Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching” (John 14:24).

This is not merely a matter of morality — it is clear spiritual evidence of the state of the heart. Disregarding His commands — including those related to honesty, justice, paying taxes, self-denial, and submission to authority — is not just a behavior problem; it is proof that the heart does not love the Lord.

In truth, many despise the real Jesus — not out of ignorance, but from conscious resistance. They hate Him because He commands them to live in purity, to give up unjust gain, to submit, and to stop justifying themselves.

Even if they say they love Him, sing to Him, pray, and preach, the reality is they hate Him — exactly as Scripture says: “For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed” (John 3:20).

They despise Him because He touches their “pocket,” because His presence threatens to reduce their gain and exposes the greed of Judas hidden in their hearts. They disregard Him through their actions, living as if He has no right over their lives.

The righteousness demanded by Christ — valued at the price of His death. This human hatred of the light was also used by Satan as the final weapon to bring the Lord Jesus to death. He knows that people love darkness rather than light (John 3:19), that they hate the light because it exposes their evil deeds, and that truth awakens resistance in the hearts of those living in sin.

We see this clearly in Matthew 22:15–22, which describes Satan’s well-crafted plan. He inspired the religious leaders to pose a seemingly legitimate question, with the aim of stirring the crowd’s hatred not only against His teaching, but against Christ Himself.

Though the question appears to come from men, the initiative was not purely human. Behind this trap-question was Satan, the author of the scheme to discredit and eliminate Christ.

The question about paying the tax to Caesar was a double-edged challenge. The Jewish people detested the Roman regime not only for political reasons but also because of the heavy tax burden imposed by the occupying power — a burden comparable to the compulsory quotas imposed by the Soviet regime in Romania after World War II.

Satan exploited this tension, knowing that a simple approval of paying the tax could ignite the crowd’s hatred. Knowing His teaching on non-resistance to the one who takes what is yours — “If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat as well” (Matthew 5:40) — Satan sought to trap Him in a way that would justify His condemnation.

Knowing that His answer could not contradict His own teaching, Satan, through this question, succeeded in provoking the hatred of the Jewish people. When the Lord Jesus said to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, He was perceived as a traitor to the Jewish cause. This stirred the crowd's anger because His command struck directly at their desire to avoid paying the tax — at their pride, ambitions, and expectations — but above all, at their pockets, touching their income and financial comfort.

Satan achieved his goal: the crowd's hatred and, through a lie, a seemingly legitimate political accusation meant to justify condemning the Lord Jesus. The lie told by the religious leaders was that the Lord had said not to pay the tax to Caesar, portraying Him as an instigator against Roman authority. Even though He had clearly said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's," this distortion of His words was used to accuse Him of rebellion and to pressure Pilate into condemning Him.

And today, the situation has not changed. The hatred the people showed then for Christ's teaching is still present. Whoever despises this teaching and refuses to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, in reality, hates Christ — because His message strikes precisely at what they love: dishonest gain. The teaching of the Lord Jesus is radical because it unmasks those who love the wages of wickedness. It calls for a life lived in justice and submission to authorities — not in hiding income. It is a call to respect civil order, even when authorities are imperfect.

Even when something unjust is demanded of us, the Lord Jesus teaches: "Do not resist the one who is evil" (Matthew 5:39) — an invitation to lay down your right to self-defense and to live a life where righteousness and peace matter more than claiming your own rights. This teaching does not offer an easy path, but a narrow one that passes through self-denial and the cross.

Today, many love another Jesus — not the true Jesus. They love Him for the healings He performs, for the heaven He offers, for the multiplied loaves, and for solving their problems. They accept Him as long as He does not disturb their dishonest gain.

But they reject Him when He calls for integrity, obedience, renunciation, and submission. The crowd's reaction in His day is the same today: from admiration to hatred. Many listened to Him with amazement but were deeply disappointed when they realized that:

• The Lord Jesus would not lead a political revolution against Rome.

• He called for submission to an unjust regime.

• He "betrayed" them by telling them to pay the tribute to Caesar.

In the eyes of the crowd, such a Messiah was a great disappointment. That is why their hatred grew, culminating in the cry: “Crucify Him!”. Isaiah describes this reaction exactly: “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not” (Isaiah 53:3). This hatred for the authentic Jesus is not merely a historical reality — it is a constant trait of the human heart.

The Lord Jesus was despised not because He failed to meet human expectations, but because of His holiness, His pure heart, and His exposing of sin, calling people to a life of submission — even in the face of injustice. He Himself says in John 7:7: “The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.” The truth Christ spoke disturbed them because His light revealed the darkness in their hearts.

The same disdain persists today. Many admire the Lord Jesus for His sacrifice for our sin, but despise His commands — especially when they affect their material interests.

It is easier to love a “Jesus” who asks little than to follow the crucified Christ who asks for everything. When truth touches personal gain, many prefer to close their ears and turn away.

The true Jesus, as revealed in Scripture, is not merely a symbol of unconditional love, but the Lord and Master who calls to repentance, submission, the cross, and a holy life. He did not seek popularity but spoke truth, even at the cost of hatred and the cross. Scripture is clear: “Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness more than light because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).

In contrast, the false Jesus promoted in many religious organizations is a comfortable projection: a Jesus who does not condemn sin, does not demand holiness, does not speak of judgment, but only of salvation through grace, acceptance, and blessing. This false image is loved because:

• It does not require real repentance, only emotional affiliation.

• It does not confront sin, but ignores or redefines it.

• It does not speak of the cross, only of grace.

• It does not call to submission, but to spiritual independence.

Yet choosing to keep what does not belong to us is a direct offense to God’s holiness. The Lord Jesus does not accept partial repentance; He demands complete separation from wickedness and a full turning from the deeds of darkness.

A true encounter with Christ produces radical change — as in the case of Zacchaeus, who sought no excuses but chose to make right what he had done wrong. This is what authentic repentance looks like: it admits guilt, corrects the wrong, and brings light where there was darkness.

The Lord Jesus is hated because He calls us to live in all that is right. He is not manipulated by religious appearances, but penetrates deep into the heart and demands truth. And truth demands self-denial, renunciation, and restitution. He does not come to comfort us in sin, but to free us from it. He calls us to return what we have stolen and hidden.

For many, letting go of what they have unjustly obtained over a lifetime seems almost impossible — too heavy a burden. The false Jesus is loved because He does not trouble the conscience or demand restitution of stolen goods. He does not insist on repairing sin. That is why many justify keeping what was obtained unjustly by misinterpreting grace — thinking that God "overlooks times of ignorance" (Acts 17:30).

But this verse does not support keeping stolen goods; it proclaims God's universal call to repentance: "God overlooked times of ignorance, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent." Grace does not cancel justice; it fulfills it through repentance and restoration.

This restoration is not an act of heroism or a personal merit to be praised, but proof of sincere repentance. It is repentance from shameful deeds — acts that are a direct offense to God's holiness. It is not something to boast about, but something to do in humility, with tears, and with recognition of the seriousness of sin.

He calls us to abandon the sin of Achan — the stolen things stubbornly kept under the excuse that "it's too hard to return them." But that very difficulty is the test of authentic repentance. Refusal to give up what is not ours shows that the heart has not truly turned from wickedness. God seeks not excuses, but complete obedience.

True repentance does not seek excuses; it seeks light. It does not negotiate with sin; it condemns and removes it. It is not a boast for the courage to return stolen goods, but a painful admission that we have lived in darkness — in hidden sin, in wickedness. It is an admission that, for example, in Romania—and wherever such a culture has prevailed—we have lived in a culture of theft from the state inherited from communism: people stole from the collective and from factories—potatoes, apples, grapes, even nails. True repentance means leaving behind forever the shameful deeds that offend God.

This post is an excerpt from the booklet "Life Lived in the Righteousness of Christ", which you can read in full, free of charge. More studies and resources for spiritual awakening are available at https://www.unmodifiedword.com.